

SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM.

Reprinted from
The Standard Bearer."

**Prabartak Publishing House,
CHANDERNAGORE.**

Published by the
PRABARTAK PUBLISHING HOUSE,
CHANDERNAGORE. ^c

January, 1922.

Sadhana Press,
Chandernagore.

CONTENTS.

Spiritual Communism (<i>Introduction</i>)	...	1
Our Communal Yoga	11
Ourselves	13
The New Commune	19
Collective Sadhana	28
The Communal Life	37
Our Communal Mission	46
Divine Brotherhood	55
The Car of Jagannath	64
The Spiritual Call of Bengal	...	73

SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM.



Spiritual Communism is a creative gošpel. It aims at the evolution of a new human society founded upon spirituality. In two important and fundamental points it differs from normal society. First, the spiritual society, unlike present human society, does not start from a basis of conflict and separative egoism, but establishes itself on the firm foundation of harmony and unity of being. Normal human society is a compromise of divergent interests and needs, it is a balance of different and antagonistic claims and responsibilities, an armed and forced balance maintained at the point of the sword or directed under the rigid machinery of the law. What we call progress and civilisation

INTRODUCTION.

is indeed this frequently changeful adjustment and re-adjustment of this scheme of society, the continual recastment of its balance-sheet, the endeavour and arrangement for the greater and greater satisfaction and efficiency of the physical, the vital and the mental life of man. The spiritual society accepts all the present arrangement and order, but accepts only to take up and transform the imperfect system and remould it in the spirit and type of a living spiritual realisation of oneness and soul-harmony.

Further, while normal society confines its range of vision and activity within the three terms of existence, the circle of the mind, life and body, spiritual communism goes farther penetrating beyond this interminable circle, this *brahma-chakra*, and anchors itself on just that in man and above man, man as he is now, that which has been utterly neglected in the actual government of society or only very inadequately developed—the soul-being which is the central and intimate truth of his life and existence. Our fullest manhood will remain still incomplete, if left for ever to rot within the limited precincts of this lower existence and this very mental-vital-physical organism is made an end in itself, sufficient for its own enjoy-

SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM.

ment and satisfaction. Spiritual communism starts with a new conception and experience of man—the realisation of the supramental and spiritual being, thinking and living through this instrumental mould of mind and matter. And because this conception and realisation applies itself as much to the individual as to the collective man, it is the divine self-fulfilment of man, both as a race and the individual that is the complete motive and intention and should be the practical endeavour and effect of a spiritualistic communal life.

It has been sometimes held, as an argument against the new mission, an argument powerful enough in academic deliberations, that such a spiritual community cannot really come into being unless man has successfully attained to the state of supermanhood, that the *sangha*, ideally true enough, is yet an unrealised birth and that it is not until the superman actually descends and holds the helm, that there can be any such true and abiding movement at all. The point is, that if all this means that men must live individual lives and even in their bid for the supramental, must dash forward as isolated souls struggling towards the higher evolution till the very goal, high and far off, has been reached and then alone, amongst those souls,

INTRODUCTION.

There are dangers and pitfalls to be pitilessly warned against. Spiritual communism is a complex growth. There is no tempting short-cut to it for man. So long as egoism and attachment, even in its last remnants, cling to the vital being of the communal leader, there can indeed be no perfect and faultless commune. Real love has neither desire nor ambition, nor self-satisfying enjoyment nor over-riding passion for rule and mastery. The *chakra-pati* has to be egoless and pure, a perfect and faultless instrument to be the centre of a faultless and perfect commune. It is around a pure centre of divine love that the *samgha* grows in an ever-expanding circle of harmony.

Man, in his weakness of heart, often finds it convenient to avoid much of the labour and pain of original thinking and bold initiative by relegating the charge of one's spiritual life and responsibility to the *Guru* or the *Avatar*. This he calls his absolute consecration and rests happy and content. Such weak-kneed and emotional devotion, *Bhakti*, even when blind and ignorant, if really sincere, has its value and place in spiritual evolution. It may serve as a first prop, a good stepping-stone to real consecration and spirituality. But so long as that spiritual inertia, *tanasic jadima*, is

SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM.

not mercilessly brushed aside, and the faith of the heart does not reveal a state of conscious and self-established consecration, there is no permanent spiritual basis created in the soul. And without a solid spiritual basis in each soul, there can be no true and abiding *samgha*-life.

Specially this is so in a devotional land like ours, in India. Men, waiting with gaping admiration for the descent of the superman, and determined not to stir an inch towards life and creation, present indeed a sad though unfortunate, not an uncommon spectacle amongst this long-fallen nation. Such spiritual servility must also have to be banished, swift and sure, from the mentality and temperament of the nation. It has been the age-long habit and even unconscious will of the people to rest content with a sterile and barren hero-worship, often to the utter extent of reducing originalities of genius and individualities of soul-types to mere shadows and reflections—pitiable echoes of a great tune of a great master-chanter. This temperament and will has every chance of making silent, often imperceptible intrusion into this mighty new experiment of nature—the evolution of supermanhood in humanity, and thus at any rate detaining—for arresting is beyond its power—the

INTRODUCTION.

progress and success of the movement. Humanity is in need of creative faith and self-confident genius—not only strong and proved souls, but original men. Real harmony is possible only between original souls and self-established personalities. Supramentalised, only such relations can stand self-revealed as the eternal divine relationship between superman and superman. Here even an apparent division of being is only a bold and patient preparation of nature for the crowning fulfilment of that divine harmony.

As a matter of ultimate and eventual fact, spiritual communism will be a free and self-fulfilling, divine government of free and self-fulfilling souls—spiritual anarchists, who alone are capable of realising the inmost mystery and full significance of the law of freedom and equality and therefore of the law of harmony and brotherhood. The perfect *chakra* can have for its immortal foundation Truth and Truth alone—and no man, nor even superman, neither *guru* nor *avatar*. Neither for any special individual, nor for a body of individuals, neither for a new pontiff nor for a new priest-craft to monopolise the spiritual and supra-mental capital of God can be the supreme intention of Nature or the final will of Humanity. Such an idea

SPIRITUAL COMMUNISM.

or attempt, if concealingly cherished or unconsciously cropping up anywhere is bound to be violently rejected by the Mother and in no time shattered to pieces. Nature will brook no centralisation, mental nor even supramental, in her perfect creation. For the perfect *chakra* is the divine circle, whose middle-centre is no other than the Eternal Master—Purushottoma Himself. It is the Heaven of Delight, where Sri Radha plays in multiple bodies Her immortal *lila* of love and bliss and harmony with Her One Lord, Srikrishna, the All-beautiful and the All-blissful. There each soul is in all souls, for each is in the Lord and with the Lord. There each soul is *Radha* Herself in the embrace of *Krishna*, in the *Rasha-mandal* of *Ananda*. And the circuit of that joy-circle is from *ananda* to *ananda*, from harmony to harmony. There it is, in the realm of bliss, of *sacchidananda*, that spiritual communism attains its finality and perfection.

OUR COMMUNAL YOGA.

When I am passive, She comes down in torrents—She, the Mother and fills me up from top to toe. She permeates every inch of my being. I long to lose myself in Her. I long to be dissolved and re-appear again. To dive deep, to peep out of the infinite bosom again—this is my play with my Mother. This play is *leela*.

I am a centre of this *leela*. You are another centre. He, a third and so on and so forth. These centres clash and clasp with one another. They hide their faces from one another's sight. They turn again in irresistible attraction. They wipe tears of separation. They join their lips in sweet unification of heart. This interplay is *love*. Love is the heart of *leela*.

OUR COMMUNAL YOGA.

Our communal work is the expression of love. We serve in love. We express ourselves out of the fulness of the soul. Behind the work is the Will—the Will to be one-in-difference. Here Love is Knowledge and Knowledge is Work—all mingle together into Sacchidananda.

Aum, Brahman is Kali and Kali is Brahman. He is Sacchidananda. She is Sacchidananda.

We are the children of Sacchidananda.

Remember, Mind, remember! Remember, Heart, remember !! Remember, Soul, remember !!!

Aum ! Aum !! Aum !!!

*

*

*

*

OURSELVES.

We come into the field to-day entrusted with a special mission and as bearers of a new ideal and a new message. The message we bear to humanity is the message of a spiritual ideal and of a life that must be its expression and the growing body of its reality. Our endeavour shall be to prepare the paths and to accomplish the beginning of a great and high change which we believe to be and aim at making the future of the race and the future of India. Our ideal is a new birth of humanity into the spirit ; our life must be a spiritually inspired effort to create a body of action for that great new birth and creation.

OURSELVES.

A spiritual ideal has always been the characteristic idea and aspiration of India. But the progress of Time and the need of humanity demand a new orientation and another form of that ideal. The old forms and methods are no longer sufficient for the purpose of the Time-Spirit. India can no longer fulfil herself on lines that are too narrow for the great steps she has to take in the future. Nor is ours the spirituality of a life that is aged and world-weary and burdened with the sense of the illusion and miserable inutility of all God's mighty creation. Our ideal is not the spirituality that withdraws from life but the conquest of life by the power of the spirit. It is to accept the world as an effort of manifestation of the Divine, but also to transform humanity by a greater effort of manifestation than has yet been accomplished, one in which the veil between man and God shall be removed, the divine manhood of which we are capable shall come to birth and our life shall be remoulded in the truth and light and power of the spirit. It is to make of all our action a sacrifice to the master of our action and an expression of the greater self in man and of all life a Yoga.

The West has made the growth of the intell-

OURSELVES.

ectual, emotional, vital and material being of man its ideal, but it has left aside the greater possibilities of his spiritual existence. Its highest standards are ideals of progress, of liberty, equality and fraternity, of reason and science, of efficiency of all kinds, of a better political, social and economical state, of the unity and earthly happiness of the race. These are great endeavours, but experiment after experiment has shown that they cannot be realised in their truth by the power of the idea and the sentiment alone : their real truth and practice can only be founded in the spirit. The west has put its faith in its science and machinery and it is being destroyed by its science and crushed under its mechanical burden. It has not understood that a spiritual change is necessary for the accomplishment of its ideals. The East has the secret of that spiritual change, but it has too long turned its eyes away from the earth. The time has now come to heal the division and to unite life and the spirit.

This secret too has been possessed but not sufficiently practised by India. It is summarised in the rule of the Gita, *yogasthah kuru karmani*. Its principle is to do all actions in Yoga, in union with God, on the foundation of the highest self and through the rule of all our members by the

OURSELVES

power of the spirit.' And this we believe to be not only possible for man but the true solution of all his problems and difficulties. That then is the message we shall constantly utter and this the ideal that we shall put before the young and rising India, a spiritual life that shall take up all human activities and avail to transfigure the world for the great age that is coming. India, she that has carried in herself from of old the secret, can 'alone lead the way in this great transformation of which the present *sandhya* of the old *yugā* is the forerunner. This must be her mission and service to humanity,—as she discovered the inner spiritual life for the individual, so now to discover for the race its integral collective expression and found for mankind its new spiritual and communal order.

Our first object shall be to declare this ideal : insist on the spiritual change as the first necessity and group together all who accept it and are ready to strive sincerely to fulfil it : our second shall be to build up not only an individual but a communal life on this principle. An outer activity as well as an inner change is needed and it must be at once a spiritual, cultural, educational, social and economical action. Its scope, too, will be at once individual and communal, regional and national,

and eventually a work not only for the nation but for the whole human people. The immediate of this action will be a new creation, a spiritual education and culture, an enlarged social spirit founded not on division *but* on unity, on the perfect growth and freedom of the individual, but also on his unity with others and his dedication to a larger self in the people and in humanity, and the beginning of an endeavour towards the solution of the economic problem founded not on any western model but on the communal principle native to India.

Our call is to young India. It is the young who must be the builders of the new world,—not those who accept the competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the West as India's future ideal, nor those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater ideal. They must be men who will dedicate themselves not to the past or the present but to the future. They will need to consecrate their lives to an exceeding of their lower self, to the realisation of God in themselves and in all human beings and to a whole-minded and indefatigable labour for the

OURSELVES

nation and for humanity. This ideal can be as yet only a little seed and the life that embodies it a small nucleus, but it is our fixed hope that the seed will grow into a great tree and the nucleus be the heart of an ever-extending formation. It is with a confident trust in the spirit that inspires us that we take our place among the standard-bearers of the new humanity that is struggling to be born amidst the chaos of a world in dissolution and of the future India, the greater India of the rebirth that is to rejuvenate the mighty outworn body of the ancient Mother.

THE NEW COMMUNE.

The birth and growth of a new ideal is always an event of capital importance for mankind. More so, when the ideal descends from the plane of *bhava* to our *Jagrata loka*, when the spirit flings itself into form and takes on a visible shape and body. In our ancient Indian phraseology, out of the *Aurupa*, a shapeless chaos of fermentation, the idea springs into definite and tangible form, *Rupa*, and immediately begins to materialise. Society, literature, art, nation, in fact all that has any form and shape, subtle or *sthula*, of greater or smaller dimensions, has been thus made by the secret working of the Idea. Even the mere idea without form is a formidable force, but incapable of material action. Therefore, when a great ideal

THE NEW COMMUNE

descends in man, and not only seizes hold of his thoughts and adoration, but demands his living worship—when the idea sets to translate itself into a great body of action and is no more an idol of the dreamy thinker, but a fiery reality making itself felt through every part of his being, working even through the very limbs and nerves of his body—that is a thing of rejoicing even for the gods in their heavens.

Such a new Force formulating itself is the great fact we humbly proclaim and essay adequately to represent in the terms of our communal living. It is the idea of a New Commune.

There have been communes in the past, attempts at collective living in Europe as well as in Asia, communes religious, social, cultural, political, of diverse pure or mixed complexions—as that of the socio religious type of the earlier Christian Church which later took upon the religio-temporal stamp ; or that which was of the latter kind from its beginning—the congregation of the followers of Islam. The Buddhist Samgha, whose rapid creation was a thing of as much wonder as its sudden banishment right out of the Indian borders, is another great Asiatic instance of a mighty communal effort under a gigantic spiritual inspiration

THE NEW COMMUNE

brought on by a super-personality of unsurpassed powers. The attempt, manifestly, sustained a defeat in India. But Buddhism itself triumphed in disguise, for the India of the Pauranic age which followed, remained Budhistic to its very core, only the name was not there. Buddhistic communism, however, was a far greater success, both in name and form, in China. Still it was not Buddha, but the characteristic social tendencies of the Chinese people themselves that made the thing what it is even to this day. Buddha's spiritual nihilism is ill compatible with a communal living in the world. It was an anomaly, and Indian history bears a striking testimony to the failure of that irreconcilable admixture.

The Christian Church also could not prevent a hopeless divorce of spiritual and secular living. Europe was christianised, but it was not the Christianity for which Jesus bled on the cross and St. Francis did his *tapasya*. The communalistic tendency seized violently on Europe, it still holds its own there in a thousand and one forms, but it is political, economical, materialistic communalism, not Christian communism which Europe at one time just after the fall of the Roman Empire set out to establish. It has missed or left out of ac-

THE NEW COMMUNE

count the one thing needful in its breathless materialistic drive, it has ignored the great spiritual possibilities of man.

The one formidable commune—we are using the word in its wide general sense—which has survived the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of fortune, and after much cruel blood-shed in the way of fanatical aggressiveness, preserved a solid and admirably organised vast socio-religious body in its unimpaired unity, is of that Mahomedanism. The Moslem commune has so long proved too invincible for Time, but it is now threatened seriously with a political disaster in its outer organism, which cannot but tell heavily on its other elements of life. Pan-islamism is after all a desperate adventure, though Nature seldom leaves undone any experiment, while there is yet any the least room for it, and often pursues it to some extreme limit, if for no other purpose, at least to bring a conclusion out of it, one way or the other. Moreover, Mahomedanism has to admit a much freer element of change and progressiveness in her social and religious temperament, before she can reshape her communal life into some form that may be desirable to the Universal Mother and more in keeping with the spirit of the future.

THE NEW COMMUNE

Coming nearer to our times, there have been more recent movements towards some sort of communalism, at any rate collectivism with more or less doubtful promises. Baha-ulla's catholic brotherhood, a religio-cultural movement which takes its origin in Persia and has some chance of success amongst the free thinking circles of France, has yet to make its mark. Nietzsche's vision of the superman of veritable *asuric* dimensions was followed by a portentous attempt of Nature to incarnate it into shape but the shape it took was in the nature of a tightly-set formidable State-idea with all its top-heavy mechanical rigidity, which is repulsively foreign to the freer atmosphere associated with the communal idea. It has had its chance, but has failed, and failed miserably, even terribly. The state-idea has had its day, but the pendulum has now swung to quite another extreme. It is now Bolshevism which has come to the fore-front and has entered into a terrible trial of strength with the established forces of order. Bolshevism too, seems to have a communal idea but communism with a vengeance behind its dark cover of fire and steel. While it hovers like a grim spectre from east to west with its giant strides, and threatens to hurl kingdoms, monarchs, thrones, down to the dust,

THE NEW COMMUNE

it has sent a galvanizing shock through the veins of the wondering world—some to admire, some to hate, but all waiting with gaping breath as to what this mighty experiment of Nature will ultimately result in Bolshevism, with all its hideous notoriety as well as with all its vaunted hope of peace and freedom for the nations, is a vehement attempt of Nature to storm by violence the kingdom of heaven. It is the terrible death-dance of the forces of *Rudra*, the second Power of God, who demands in a thundering voice the immediate change of the Old Order, but knows not what to replace it by. Lenin, its high priest, preaching the gospel of liberty and peace for man, yet compelled to use brute force as his means, and shrinking not to proclaim it even through the cannon-mouth, may have been seized on by a hazy dream of the future ideal, which he preaches as his Society of Nations. But whatever there may lie in his heart or in his ideal thought, that the world has yet to know more correctly ; his violent *asuric tapasya* has mightily misapplied it—for not *Rudra*, but the Lord of Wisdom and Power is the ruler of the future and his luminous native voice of harmony does not come resonant and clear from the *aurora-borealis*, northern horizons, of all the Russias. What Lenin's

THE NEW COMMUNE

Russia will achieve for humanity is yet in the lap of the gods and hidden from the eyes of men ; it is too early yet to pronounce any judgment at this stage or to prophesy, but there too we find the full spiritual gift lacking or overshadowed under a thick heaviness of Tartar blood and the weight of the purblind *rajasic* culture of Europe. *Rajas* has its place in nature—*Rudra* even his day, but he is only the field-preparer. In vain do we look for the integral light, the true central inspiration in all these quarters. For that Secret of the future harmony, we have to turn our eyes elsewhere.

That centre is India. For India holds in the palm of her hands that central key to the Higher Light, which dwells concentrated as in the densely luminous orb of the sun, in the *Vijnāna*, in the seat of the Ideal. There dwell too coiled up all the integral possibilities of man, his original and ulterior genius—the truths of *bhava*, the truths of knowledge, the truths of action—indeed all the utmost significance of his spiritual, mental, and physical being in their fullness and integrality. There is the Ideal, of which all ideals and all ideas are mere glimmering rays and broken fragments. It was that of which the ancient Rishi of the Upanishads spoke and for which he prayed in fervent breath-

THE NEW COMMUNE

less accents ; 'to remove the shining lid from the vision, which hides the face of the Truth and reveal to him its utter glories'.

The new dawn in India has come with a similar promise of effulgence—the effulgence of the Vijnana in man, is even a greater dawn than those ancient ones that went before. For those of the past had brought lights to the individual only to illumine his inner spiritual life, but this has to reveal to the race its integral communal expression.

The divine fiat has gone forth. The Shakti has long been preparing the field. The foundation has already been made ready. The Vijnana was itself so long at work, but it had worked under cover, from behind the veil. That was well. That was necessary." But the time is ripe to lift the cover and unfold the Sun.

The commune that the Mother is shaping into form is no monopoly for any chosen few. It is indeed a new spiritual and communal order. But it is no so-called religious order, no *sampradaya*, in the vein of the *sampradayas* of old that abounded like mushrooms and overshadowed the free growth of the people. Samgha is neither *samaja* nor *sampradaya*, nor it is a co-operative association after the raw westernised pattern. Samgha is built from

THE NEW COMMUNE

the Vijnana. It rests not on the flimsy foundation of a collaboration of mutual interests, forced together by the drive of some fleeting idea or shifting sentiment or principle. Its foundation is not division, but unity. The samgha rests on the soul—its oneness, its joy, its inviolable harmony of will-in-power, with an ample scope for individual greatness and the play of diversity in the One. The New Commune, therefore, is for all who accept the Soul.

COLLECTIVE SADHANA.

A collective Yoga must be inspired by a collective spirit of spiritual development, which is the very thing we miss in the ordinary systems of Yogic culture. Patanjali's Rajayoga, the one that usually goes by the general name of Yoga, the Hathayoga, the Jnana, Bhakti and Karmayogas—all of them, whether physical or psychical or spiritual in their starting point and method, or any possible combination of the five systems—are pre-eminently individual systems, meant for individual Sadhana, with an individual self-salvation for their motive-spring and ultimate goal. But the world-spirit of the modern age is unmistakably bent on a collective movement, both in its thought and ideal as well as in its power in life. The age of the

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

anchorite is already past or is on the verge of passing. We are men and women of the collective age, living in a collective atmosphere, not only in our more outward life and action, but even in our inward thought and ideation.

The grand achievements of material science, the agencies and machinations of mental progress and intellectual culture, the social, economical and educational facilities all over the civilised world, invariably and inevitably tend towards becoming a general possession of the race. No great modern discovery of the truths of philosophy or science, no bright scheme of a social, industrial or political advancement, no vigorous movement of life and thought for the betterment of society and human well-being—but is not collective in its aim and endeavour and in its eventual application bent on the purification and liberation of mankind as a whole. In fact, every great effort, every high labour for the chastening of human culture and the raising of the standard of civilisation—if it is to be worthy of the name, must be born of a collective outlook with a sincere universal inspiration at its back.

If such must needs be the characteristic feature of our mental and material endeavours, those that

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

belong to our more superficial hemisphere of being, how much more so should that be the governing law and distinctive character of our spiritual development—that vast field of our self-cultivation, which is the highest and largest and most momentous to affect one way or the other, the onward progress of our evolutionary march !

That collective character, therefore, must from the very beginning, mark the inception and formulation of the new Yoga of synthetic fulfilment, not only in its ideal and ultimate arrival, but also in its start and procession, in its method and arrangement, the integral system, if system it can at all be called, must be both conceived and framed as well as evolved and worked out in the collective and communal spirit. A perfect divine life for a self-fulfilling humanity cannot be brought about save by means of an as powerful and effective Yoga, offering the needed opportunity and vantage-ground for a collective practice by the collective human Soul.

Such an integral spirit, however, can never be said to be, in any historical or recognizable pre-historic period, the crying need or a clear possession of humanity or any sufficiently large and stable group of mankind. Even India with her

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

splendid and superfine spiritual past, when she practised a fuller and more comprehensive Yoga than that which she followed in her later ages of darkening light, even that earlier Yoga of the Vedas, that unified heaven and wedded spirit to matter, sorrowfully lacked the collective motive or emphasised only in a feeble and most insufficient manner upon its necessity and importance. All that was natural and in keeping with the Time-Spirit for those were not collective, but pre-eminently individual ages of world history, and in those primitive periods, Nature through India, her spiritual daughter, was busy discovering the secret of ~~an~~ inner spiritual life primarily for the individual—as are all great discoveries in their earlier inception traceable to the individual, who naturally the subtler, suppler and in advance of the more subconscious and unillumined collectivity, whose nature is to move rather in the mass with a dull, slow and heavy pace, can far more easily comprehend and assimilate, apply and utilise the various apparatus of knowledge, vision, realisation than the other is capable of. It is only in rare instances here and there, in the great body of the Vedic hymns, that we discover occasional hints and gleams of a vast collective Yoga.

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

But once that discovered, once the individual problem was solved and culminated in the attainment by the individual of its highest heights and its profoundest depths of being, a new orientation more and more marked, naturally the onward endeavours of the soul, which tended towards a widening of the scope of spiritual culture and the enlargement and extension of its power of good, by a greater and more popular effort to reach out its helping hand to the general mass of men. Such was indeed the drift of the mighty teachings of Srikrishna to His warrior-disciple and friend, when in the Geeta he laid down His vast scheme of synthetic philosophy and spiritual realisation. "Even the Shudra, and the woman and the sinner is capable of entering the path of Yoga," he said, "provided he or she be sincere in his or her seeking of the divine—not to speak of the Brahmana of virtue and the devoted Rajarshi, like His listener himself. That was the ancient way of saying that the Yoga, though individually spoken to and meant principally for individual practice, was to be no monopoly of an elect few, but the common treasure of all, irrespective of sex, colour, caste or creed—and was therefore, available without restriction for the experience and attainment

of all who cared to benefit by it. In later periods this wide catholicity of the Gēeta, though lost sight of in actual practice by the narrow social mind for many reasons in many directions, giving rise to various conflicting dogmas, narrow customs and quarrelling creeds and sects, quite natural in such an unwieldy fold of continental vastness as that of Hinduism, was never totally abandoned by the advancing Time-Spirit—for the great note was soon to be taken up again and on a far grander scale than evinced in any earlier attempt within historic memory—we are speaking of the mighty heart of Tathagata Buddha, who preached his truth to man and woman, prince and beggar alike, and strove to saturate life, society, the whole mass of people with his formidable nihilistic views and other-worldly trend of spirituality. • Though it was a rather moralised religion, a popular edition of practical Yoga made easy for the ethical man, yet the attempt, it must be acknowledged, was great in itself and should not be undervalued,—it was indeed the natural practicalisation of a high endeavour that was to be indelibly instilled into the marrows of the nation.

The popular spiritual culture enunciated by Buddhism and emphasised and developed by the

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

subsequent teachers and preachers, down to Nanaka, Ramanānda, Ramanuja and Shri Chaitanya, is the historical record in India of a mighty effort of Nature to bring out and utilise the Yoga-experience of isolated individuals for the service of the mass. That supreme and noble tendency has now been brought forward by the Universal Mother once more into the practical field of spiritual culture ; this time, in one of her most earnest and intensest will-moods, with a more comprehensive and faultless array of favourable atmospheric advantages and environmental conditions, and therefore with a far greater and fuller chance of success than what was possible in any previous recorded age.

What, then, are the essential steps of such a collective *Sadhāna* under modern conditions ? The message is already there, hovering about in the spiritual atmosphere of the world, for those who care to heed to it and understand. It has really three parts : (1) For each man as an individual to change himself into the future type of divine humanity—the man of the new Satyayuga that is striving to be born ; even in a communal Yoga such as ours, it is the individual who has to come first, it is he who as the starting point has to accept and

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

develop the Yoga in himself before he can rightly and effectively utilise it for collective service ; but at the same time, because it is ideally a collective sadhana, he must, from the very beginning, practise it with his eye fixed on communal development and its integral collective expression. (2) To evolve a race of such men, an ideal divine nation to lead humanity in its collective progress. The present age is undoubtedly the age of nation-growth and the secret will of the Universal Mother is variously manifest in our broken material and patriotic efforts to create, preserve and expand the national being all the world over—these are mere first signs, half way-house and first attempts only towards the perfect nation-building that is in her deeper will-consciousness—for the secret of that divine nation is still a covert secret and has yet to be found—that secret is not material or political, nor even social, religious or psychological, but spiritual in its inspiration and principle, spiritual in its governing motor-power and essential character and of that utmost secret India possesses the key.

The third and ultimate part of it is to call all humanity to the path under the lead of these pioneers and this chosen nation, India, has the best chance and best right to create that pioneer

COLLECTIVE SADHANA

nation and become the leader of the future—to do in the right way, what Germany thought of doing in the wrong way. And the task is easier and nearer to her heart than to any other—for she has only to awake from her sleep, and discover the secret of the collective Yoga, to bring out what she already has developed in herself, only has she to transmute the individual capital into a national and universal possession and proceed at once to its communal practice and expression. But in order to do this, first she must learn to think originally, to cast off old ideas and turn her face resolutely to the future. But she cannot do this, if she merely copies new European collectivism or go on reproducing Buddhistic asceticism. We are rather afraid, that the old religious organisations, with all their good intentions, are only going to give us Shankaracharya and Buddhistic humanitarianism. That is a thing which we cannot too much warn against, for that is not the goal to which the world is moving.

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

Russia has tried materialistic communism. It has achieved a great material success against unprecedented odds. But to the seeing prophetic vision, the thing is in the *Karana* already a failure. Its vital and material verification will follow suit—not necessarily to-day or to-morrow. •For what happens in the *harana* does not immediately manifest itself. It has to work itself out through the difficult medium of time and space and circumstances. The experiment will fail because the intellect, even though backed by a blind intuition, cannot, except temporarily and fractionally, rule life. The attempt to impose its law on vital nature is a titanical, *asuric* tyranny of mental egoism over vital egoism. It is a clash of ego against ego, not

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

synthesis. Nature seeks for a synthesis. The clue is to go beyond both mind and life. A spiritual communism is the intention of Nature—the direct will of the Spirit of Humanity. The *comrades* of Russia are struggling heroically still and have still a career before them. But where is theirs the spiritual genius that alone can solve man's complete destiny ?

Communal life, is in truth the manifestation of Spiritual Unity. Its basis is in spiritual experience. Its law is the law of spiritual relation and harmony. A life of spiritual solidarity and progressive self-expression of the Infinite in an inseparably ~~inter~~-related body of creative action—that is spiritual communism. *Samgha* is divine brotherhood. It is the One throwing itself into many-hood for a various taste and enjoyment of its own essential unity. *Samgha* is the fruit of pure bliss, the realisation and embodiment of heavenly love. Soul knows soul and possesses its intimate truth. The relation is an eternal inter-penetration and inter-fusion in the nature of an ever unfolding play of love and harmony.

The action of the spirit in life is a growth from within. The determination comes from above. It is a sort of influx of divine will that descends on

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

the heart of humanity. The soul of man in response sends up a current of inner energy, which immediately begins to realise itself. The movement occurs first in the thought-soul. New ideas grow, new conceptions, impulses, tendencies rise into action within the soul. New potentialities spring up and move towards an increasing crystallisation. The Spirit above touches the human soul and sets it aflame with a new life. Souls, thus touched to fire draw together under an invisible attraction and awaken to the consciousness of their inner affinity. As the experience grows deepened with closer and still closer communion, affinity dissolves itself into unity. The *samgha-consciousness* becomes ripe and perfect, when each individual soul realises its complete unity with the one divine self residing in and working through all.

This divine consciousness in man is not merely an article of faith, or intellectual thought, but a living knowledge. The song of harmony will ever remain an incomplete and unrealised strain, so long as man cannot transcend his body and mind, the limitations of his present life. It is a complete change that is necessary—the wholesale and all-round transfiguration of his half-illumined humanity. The growth of the divine in the soul is a pro-

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

cess of new evolution. Each soul has to put himself determinedly on the direct path of this divine evolution. Each must prepare himself for this divine new birth. We must be new born in unity, in spirit, in God. The principal obstructions are of the mind and heart and very specially of the life-soul. These must be transcended and transmuted. Souls, successfully ascending to the *vijnan-consciousness*, are the spiritual giants missioned to realise the *divine samgha* on earth. These are the pioneers—the fore-runners of the new age of harmony. But it is all humanity that must follow suit. Indeed, so long as the entire race does not rise to this grand realisation, the divine victory will remain unaccomplished.

But it has to be remembered full well all the while that it is not merely number and volume that is either the real measure or the true look-out of communism. It is solidarity, reality, truth that has to be built into the stuff of our evolving manhood. Growth is the natural fruit of truth. If the *Samgha* be founded on the divine truth of harmony, its expansion is inevitable, its growth is secure. The first condition of a solid *samgha-consciousness* is establishment on a perfect self-faith. Desire for growth and expansion is bound to bring

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

disturbance in this poise of faith. Man has to deserve success and not desire for it. Faith alone can bring down clearer knowledge, faith alone gives force of increasing expansion. All that is necessary is this pure faith and a consecrated aspiration. The aspiration of the *samgha* must be entirely concentrated towards its direct evolution into its own divine perfection.

Still expansion is a necessity. Expansion is the *dharmā* of life. The new spirit needs flow in stronger and ever stronger currents amongst an ever-increasing number of men, so that the new change may all the more rapidly come over the heart and soul of humanity. As a movement advances, it gathers in velocity and momentum. The law of motion has its value for the living soul and need not be disregarded. But all true growth is a process of joy. The evolution of the communal soul will be like the evolution of a living tree, the glad and green march of spontaneous self-expression. Only the roots must run deep enough into the soil so that they may draw the sap in perennial flow and nourish the tree even at its position of self-establishment.

It is needless to mention in detail the mighty difficulties that stand in the way of communal

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

solidarity. Unless a Higher Power is there working from behind, it is impossible for man even to conceive of, still less to achieve, under the existing conditions of things, a complete harmony. Is it not a superhuman task to summon that love, that faith, that consecration, that spiritual genius and strength in each unit soul, that alone can relate him for eternity to the other units and ultimately unify him with them in indissoluble self-realisation? The *samgha* cannot attain to the full height and depth of its truth, so long as the souls of the *samgha* do not find each in the being of the other, growing into deeper and deeper intimacy of the soul-relationship, till the very central truth-essence is reached, where all dissolve into the delight of indivisible unity. That is the highest delight, for that is the final realisation.

Communism is indeed a heavenly gospel, which man, shallow as he is and full of self-ambition often desecrates in his hot speed of action. Communism is a divine revelation, for which heart has to be prepared, the soul purified. Where men meet out of the sheer joy of love, where souls join in sincere consecration, where oneness is the explanation of difference and difference the outflow of unity, there we have the true *samgha*, whether in seedgerm or

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

in growing expression. There each knows that he is inseparable from the other and accepts both his virtues and sins as belonging equally to his own-self. When he struggles, he struggles in the spirit and strength of the whole *samasti-soul*, just as when a single unit slips into any fault of omission or commission, it is the whole *samasti-soul* that feels itself responsible for it and rushes to self-correction. What the *samgha* stands for is the *vrihat* truth soul of each individual—immersed in conjoint *sadhana* for conjoint purification and conjoint fulfilment.

It requires, therefore, a profound truth-vision and cautious soul-acceptance to create a stable communistic life in the perfect spiritual sense that we have imparted to it. There are two dangers which the *Samgha* has strictly to guard itself against. Two sorts of natures constitute a constant peril to its existence and growth. There are men with an over-ruling self-seeking temperament and ambition, who accept communal life, only as a subservient means to achieve their own selfish ends, as a thing to be thrown away in contempt as soon as their purpose have been served. These are souls of desire, who seek self-gratification at the cost of the *samgha* and are ready any moment to kick it

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

away, when there is no longer further chance of fulfilment. There are others also, duplicate creatures one thing within, but just the opposite without, who sail in two boats according as the wind is favourable this side or the other—these are the time-serving diplomatic souls, who are skilled experts in the art of deception and are always in secret search of an opportunity to betray the *samgha* into the hands of its enemies. To harbour such dangerous souls amidst the communal circle means cherishing the cobra and crocodile with criminal over-indulgence within the precincts of one's habitation.

These dangerous pitfalls in the path of creation have to be avoided. The causes, which are not far to seek, once discovered, are not impossible of correction. Desire—attachment, is one great traitor ; the egoistic intellect of man is indeed a greater traitor still. These inner enemies in the nature of humanity have to be mercilessly excised, so that men may not fall under their easy influences, direct or indirect and work havoc and ruin in the temple of creation. Long experience of the spiritual character and psychology of souls, scrupulous care in selection and adoption, a wide awake and alert *drishti*, aided by a disinterested and unostentatious

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

faith in and acceptance of divine guidance and protection—these constitute our shield against perils of this character and all other perils to which the *samgha soul* is exposed to, both within and without. Experience often comes after a trying test. But thus to gather experience by experiment after experiment will be an unpardonable violence done to the life and body of the *samgha*.

The perfect *drishti* is *vijnan-drishti*, which is the light easy and direct from the *Vijnan soul*. Spiritualised mentality, born of *Yoga* is only an imperfect deputy of the Higher Knowledge. Communal life, to be perfected, has to be uplifted straight to the supramental. The *Samgha* has to be remoulded in the *satyam* of its eternal and divine manifestation. *Yoga* brings in a great preparation. *Vijnan* perfects it.

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

The *samgha* is not like western associations or institutions based on any particular principle or directed towards the achievement of any particular object. Associations for the pursuit and cultivation of social, religious or political interests, formed and conducted on definite lines and tied down to laws and regulations do not constitute the true spiritualistic body which Nature in right earnest intends to evolve out of the present life of humanity. The *samgha* is a thing of divine growth. It is a creation, in the sense only of a self-evolution from within, an overt realisation of the eternity of our human relations, a natural revelation of the divine in the relations and affairs of life. *Samgha* really creates itself in the consciousness of men

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

and women by manifesting the inherent harmony and unity of souls. The discovery of the Infinite in life, possible individually, is also not impossible on a collective scale ; rather it is that which calls the greatest energies and largest faculties in man which open his heart and soul to the universal being and relate him to the universal life. For *samgha* starts with this faint perception of the universality of our individual souls and deepens this first perception into a possessing and abiding realisation.

The aspiration for the universal in the individual is a natural aspiration implanted in the human soul which seeks its self-expression in the effort towards solidarity and brotherhood, towards materialistic or spiritual communism. It is through our natural relationships of love that we first come into contact with one another. Through the heart we enter into heart and enjoy the delight of intimacy. There are, of course, enactments of tragedies and comedies in this human drama, strainings of relations, abrupt dissolutions, pangs of separation as also joys of reconciliation and re-union—all that which constitute together the warp and woof of the texture of our life. The whole heart-world is a sea of emotions, where waves clash against

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

waves or intermix with another. Hearts rising and falling together form into close alliances. The mysterious influence of religion is the strongest force that goes to the formation and consolidation of such association of heart.

There have been many such endeavours towards this sort of associated living of love. Buddha or Christ, Chaitanya or Ramkrishna, great spirits, who, by the inspiring touch of their realisations and personalities have from time to time awakened in the hearts of large bodies of men, along with the longing for divine communion, the longing for communion with their fellowmen—when they have passed away have left behind them compact associations of souls. It is indeed a matter of history, through what cruel persecutions and fiery trials these communities have had invariably to pass, each of them without exception—upholding the truth of the love they espoused and the love of the truth they worshipped and followed. But the irresistible flood of time have always tried to sweep out of living recognition these communal bodies and if they have not at all disappeared, it is because nature is cautious enough to conserve the relics of these once living and valued forces in the record of her life-history, perhaps as preserved gifts to future

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

It is good to be fore-warned and thus to be fore-armed against recapitulation of similar defeats. *Samghas* of the heart have failed to resist the demolishing assault of time and have either broken down or survived as lifeless sects, *sampradayas*, institutions—mere apologies of the divine thing they aspired after and attempted to embody in living form. Where lay the fatal defect? Why these defeats and failures? The cause is not far to seek nor too deep to understand. The heart without the saving light of knowledge is an unsteady prop and cannot be safely relied upon. The sea of emotions is too liquid a mass of natural energy to support a stable and self-established construction. Moreover, instinctive as it is, the feeling centre of man is constantly prone to blind attachment and egoism, and unless there is a blazing fire of pure aspiration and absorbing consecration to burn all unholy and selfish chaffs away, movements born of the heart and relying solely on the heart have every chance of falling into the narrow trap of that egoism and self-contraction and thus eventually reducing themselves to most ordinary and rigid mechanical communities and institutions. Such mechanisation certainly means petrefaction, means death.

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

Where a *samgha* takes its rise apparently from the heart and soul of mortal men, but really comes direct from a mysterious higher source,—however imperceptible to the superficial eye be the guidance and working of that Higher Force, and however obstructive and unclarified the mediums through which it passes, the movement is different from all similar familiar movements of the past—being different quite absolutely both in spirit and orientation, although similar in its seeming processes and outward forms. The souls active within the ever-widening circle of such a communal movement may well seem "from their superficial life-expressions to be working in the old and beaten path of emotionalism and sentimentalism—but really loyal to their inmost nature and deepest being, they "are" ever-progressive and sportful instruments moving in the hands of an Almighty Power, dancing with pure glee to the tune of the Infinite within and above and around their lives and souls. These sportive playmates of the Eternal consecrate both their *sadhana* and *siddhi* at once at the feet of their Master and Lord and scorn to care thereafter either for their ignorance or illumination once that consecration has been sincerely and solidly made. When knowledge does descend

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

on the heart of humanity, it is these easy and absolutely consecrated children of nature that can most spontaneously and beautifully offer themselves up to serve as its channels for its expression in life and its outflow on the world. Such a *samgha* it is, that grows in the type and mould of the divine *samgha* of Vrindavan and translates and retranslates in pure and ever purer, perfect and more perfect terms, the eternal text in human relationship.

Both the inspiration and mode of manifestation of such a *samgha*-mould comes from within. The outer creation is only a sign and effect of the inner soul-possession. Inner power comes from yoga, the culture of the spirit. It is on yoga therefore that our spiritual communism has established its firm roots. The natural relations of man will all remain there, only they have got to be chastened, uplifted and transformed in the light and in the truth of a realised and ever realising spiritual unity. Such a unity already exists in the depths, that is indeed the fundamental and essential truth of our being. Samgha-consciousness brings into explicit realisation this inner truth of our being and makes it at once the motor power as well as the guiding principle of thought and life and work. But it is the culture of *adhyātma yoga* alone that can thus lead

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

towards a reversal of our present limited and divided nature.

The complete reversal can come only with the acquisition of complete knowledge—the possession of *vijnana*. *Vijnana* is nothing but *vishesa jnana*, specific self-knowledge and world-knowledge. When that light comes over our soul, the whole system of our nature and existence reveals itself in all its entire truth and perfected relation. *Prakriti* and *Purusha* no longer mingle in ignorance, but recover their mutual truth-relation in light. The whole attitude of the soul towards life changes, for the human soul has then discovered its divine roots and lives no longer on the polluted fermentations of the intellect, mind and senses, but draws its sustenance from the eternal spring-waters of heaven. It is in the stream of divine consciousness that the soul bathes and re-bathes itself for its final sanctification and absolution. Our individual and related humanity begins to renew itself in a complete new nature and mode—the three *gunas* themselves release their essence and content into the transfigured divine qualities that they are in their truth. Such a transformed humanity is the ideal pursuit both of the individual and the collective soul. When the *vijnana* becomes a perfect and living possession

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

in our entire soul, the re-organised life-consciousness, at once widened and intensified, becomes the easy and natural expression of the dense truth, light, *shanti* and *shakti* of that higher creation, now hidden in the being of humanity.

•Our mission, therefore, is to cultivate, awaken and live in this *vijnana-consciousness*, individually, communally, nationally, so that a transfigured humanity may be the direct fruit and crowning achievement of our total *sadhana*. To that high end, our inner being directs itself and if our entire nature and life has not yet perfectly recast itself, it is because the whole spirit of our present national *sadhana* has, at the moment of its critical trial, to be taken up, absorbed and spiritually transmuted into a reconstituting energy, capable of re-organising itself, clearing the path of the new humanity that struggles to be born everywhere amongst all the nations of the world. Our national consciousness is in immediate need of such a high and revolutionary transmutation and re-organisation. This national re-organisation, we have seen, must needs follow in the lines of a cultural, communal and financial reconstitution, in the spirit of the past, but with our eyes wide open, direct and clear to the mightier evolution of the future, that awaits its

OUR COMMUNAL MISSION.

birth. India, great before, is being built into a greater nation, missioned to solve all the baffling problems of humanity. This mightier nation, this divine India is the great goddess who has demanded the homage and worship of our individual and collective soul. The communal soul, like a glorious self-opening flower, is called to expand itself and its first great circle of self-expansion must needs be this supramentalisation and transmutation of the national genius and life.

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

It is only spiritual unity that can give a permanent basis to brotherhood. Our relations are of blood or of heart. Kinship or friendship—this is all that man as man believes in or knows. He can with difficulty conceive of anything beyond the range of hereditary inter-relation or bonds of love and sympathy. Comradeship or brotherhood is at best a psychological consciousness. The heart pines for heart, the soul for the soul. We delight to feel together, to think together, to work together. Such intimate psychological kinship cannot survive even long physical separation. Often it is long separation that purifies the heart and intensifies the relation of love. The emotional soul thrives on the thought of object of his love. His feel-

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

ings grow finer, deeper, more sensitive and chastened in the flames of separation. But still all this has a certain circumscription—the psychological circumscription—beyond which generally it cannot go. Living in the mind and the heart, our friendships, even our purest noblest friendships, keep themselves confined within the subtle boundaries of the dream-soul—the *hiranya-garbha atman*. Real spiritual love has to break through these psychological limits and go beyond. Then can we taste of something that can be called eternal relationship. For then it is not the mere psychological soul that comes into relation with the psychological soul, the psychical is only an intermediary medium—but our spiritual realities reveal and find their eternal co-existence or rather inter-existence. Such spiritual solidarity is alone the hiding foundation of brotherhood.

A community of such spiritually conscious souls is called the *Samgha*. The English word, *commune*, so differently interpreted and applied in European socialistic nomenclature, and history, is a hopelessly inadequate rendering—almost a misnomer—for this essentially spiritual conception. *Samgha* is this essential solidarity of souls, founded on the spiritual consciousness. *Samgha* is not a

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

conglomerated body of co-operating interests, or even of emotional sympathy and love of the heart—that is at most association, even a sort of spiritualised association, based on spiritualised emotion and love—but it is the revelation and manifestation of a real and living spiritual entity, though a collective entity—the *samasti-purusha*. Indeed the *samasti-purusha* is as real and living an entity as the *vyasti-purusha*, if one has an individual life, mind, body, the other too has the same—a collective life and body and mind—one is the individual soul, the other is the collective *samgha-soul*. Spiritually, both are eternal, both manifestations of the great Third—He, who is the Transcendent.

Evidently, the realisation of such a *samgha* rests on a profound supramental and spiritual culture and experience. Men can easily think and talk of the formation of a *samgha* ; that is because they cannot exceed the formal habits of the mind, they live in the mind and think in terms of the mind itself. *Samgha* is no more a matter of mental and vital construction, than is the individual a matter of such mental and vital construction. Construction is a crude material conception after all. The soul cannot be constructed out of mind-substance or life-substance—the *samasti-soul* no

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

more than the individual soul.⁶ The soul is immortal. It reveals. It expresses itself. And in its way of expression, it may and it does take recourse to a mental and vital and other medium—but these are no more than mere instrumental mediums—the reality far exceeds the medium always and in every respect. The *Samgha-soul* is also immortal and eternally existent. It also reveals and expresses itself in time and space. It also takes on an organised instrumental body of itself. But here, too, as there, the reality far exceeds the formal instrumentality. This reality can be felt, known, experienced, only through the spiritual consciousness. As a matter of fact, all realities have that one real door for realisation.

What is the essential and actual relation between the individual soul and the collective soul? The essential relation is undoubtedly of unity, for unity is the fundamental fact of consciousness. The many depends on the One. That One, that Self is the foundation. The many dwell in the midst of that indivisible oneness—the many are its forms and expressions. The *Atman* is the fundamental reality both of the *vyasti-soul* as well as the *samasti-soul*. He is *vyasti*, he is *samasti*, all individualities and all universalsities—for there are

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

infinite self-manifestations of the Infinite—are the modes of his essential transcendent reality. But this Unity of the fundamental consciousness, of the *Sadatman*, is no blank or monotonous unity, it is the source and origin of an infinite variety of relations. The one real consciousness throws itself out into an endless number of self-variations. Actually, therefore, the *Samgha*-soul is a composite soul, containing in itself the different personal souls and revealing and realising itself through them—though in eternal essentiality, it is a simple entity, a single, inseparable, indivisible consciousness. From another stand-point, it is the *vyasti*-soul that is the basis and foundation, the *samasti* is existent and dependent on the *vyasti*. For the individual contains in himself, somewhere in his secret soul, that deep and intimate mystery, which is the hidden innermost secret, the *uttamam rahasyam* of existence. He conceals the Infinite in himself. He is the concealed Infinite. The *Ishwara* himself hides in him—the *Ishwara*, Master and Lord of the universe. It is that which, like an undying fire, ever burns in the soul, in its deepest farthermost depths, which keeps alive, in some inexplicable mysterious manner, perhaps, a dim, yet intimately-felt consciousness of something which can-

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

not be rendered into the terms of human language, something which is more than the whole universe, than all the endless universes put together; something which belongs direct to the divinity itself—nay, it is that divinity itself in one of its uttermost secrets. *Mamaivansa jivabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*. Even that dark fact of the human ego, is not utterly condemnable, for does it not attempt to reflect, although darkly and distortedly enough, that intimate fact—which is one aspect of the highest mystery? That ego is a dark representative of none but the Highest in one of his many transcendent names and forms.

It is in this sense, that the individual soul is representable as the centre of that circle of divine life, of which the universal *samasti*-soul is the large and far-extending surrounding circumference. The individual carries in him that secret, which has to be revealed under the conditions of the universal. He holds the central key to that infinite mystery, whose treasures are scattered all the universe over. To understand the universe and nature, you must understand and know your own self. To speak in terms of the *Samkhya*, the Individual represents the Purusha, the Universal, the Prakṛiti—aspects of the Divine Unknowable. That it is, which gives

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

to the *Samgha-scul*, however subtle and supple, and even spiritually liberalised, always a certain undetachable sense of mechanicality, at any rate a sense of objectivity, underlying its life and expression—a sense, a want of something inconceivable, which it misses or fails to render adequately—covertly however, it is felt to contain that, still overtly, that it remains always unable to convey. The Prakriti contains the Lord, but only secretly, the master-consciousness lies beyond.

From another aspect still, the individual has to turn round and accept the universal. The ego misrepresents; because it sets itself against the universal. The ego, however large and high, is not self-sufficient. The ego, in order to become the real individual has to universalise itself. The true and real individual is the universal-individual. Greek ethics could conceive of and assigned to the individual only a subservient place and function in the collective organism. The individual has to place himself in a harmonious relation to the human society in which he lives, similar to that in which the particular cells of his body stand to the whole organism. He has to subordinate himself to the larger totality as a particular member of it. The Hindus saw clearer and touched a deeper

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

note. Hindu spiritual ethics dissolve the difference and enjoins on the individual his utter impersonalisation and universalisation for the ultimate consummation of his very individual personality. A relation, not merely of harmony—but spiritual unity alone, constitutes true solidarity.

Divine brotherhood or *Samgha* rests on such spiritual solidarity and absolute identification. In the *samgha*, the individuals realise and experience their solidarity and unity not only with the common *samasti-soul*, but also with one another. Here, it is a sweet concord of inter-relations and inter-play—an inter-relation not only of soul and soul, and spirit and spirit—that is the fundamental, essential consciousness, which remains the inalienable background always—but it displays and realises itself also in and through all our manifest, inner and outer activities—the spiritual and supramental consciousness and *ananda* live through all the various levels of our manifest being—through the mind-soul and the life-soul not excluding our physical soul also. The *samasti* lives through the *vyasti*, the *vyasti* dwells in and fulfils the *samasti*, and simultaneously and exquisitely each *vyasti* enjoys and fulfils every other *vyasti*—all in the infinite divine way. As has been delightfully described, the honeycomb contains the

DIVINE BROTHERHOOD.

joy and sweetness of each drop only and each drop contains and realises the whole, at the same time that each can dwell in the sweetness of the other. Such a divine brotherhood is not however an ideal that is to be lived in the mere brain—divine brotherhood, as we have urged incessantly, depends upon divine experience. Of that, *Vijnana* is the key and *Yoga* the *sadhana*.

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

The ideal society is the vehicular instrument of God, the soul of collective humanity—the chariot of the Lord of the world. Unity, freedom, knowledge and power are the four wheels of this chariot.

But the society that the human intellect has formed or the impure vital play of nature has given birth to, is otherwise. It is not the chariot of God who rules the collective humanity, but it is the vehicle of that collective ego which overshadows the free soul and misinterprets the divine working in man. It treads aimlessly along a path of action, full of diverse enjoyments—driven by the unfulfilled determination of the intellect and the old or new incentive of the unregenerate lower nature. So long

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

as the ego is the master, to find the goal is impossible ; even when the goal is known it is very hard to drive the chariot straight towards it. For the ego is a great bar to the attainment of divine perfection of the individual as well as the collective self.

There are three principal divisions in an ordinary society. The first is the chariot of a skilful mechanic, beautiful, bright, pure and happy. It is conveyed by strong well-trained horses. It proceeds along the easy path carefully, slowly and steadily. *Sattwic* ego is its passenger. The chariot is moving round and round that high region, on which is situated the temple of God, but always keeping at a considerable distance and so he finds it difficult to reach the nearest proximity of that high eminence. If he is to reach it at all, he must alight from the chariot and walk on foot. The society of the old Aryans of the post-vedic times is a chariot of this type.

The second is the motor-car of a dexterous pleasure-loving fashion-monger. In a sandy hurricane, breaking the royal route with stupendous impetuosity and thunder-peals, it hurries on in turbulent and unexhausted motion and deafening the ears of the passers-by with the trumpet voices,

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

and trampling under the wheels whosoever comes across its path, it sweeps on and on. The life of the passenger is liable to be in peril at every step, mishaps and accidents grow and thicken ; the car breaks down and after laborious mending, it wends its way with vaunted speed. It has no fixed end in view but to every new sight that comes across the reach of its vision, *rajasic ahankara*, the owner of the car, turns its course and cries out with a thrill shout, "Here is the goal, here is the goal." The drive in this chariot involves plenty of enjoyment and pleasure, though not unaccompanied with chances of unavoidable dangers at times, but it cannot lead us to God. The modern occidental society is a motor-car of this description.

The third is a dirty, time-worn and half-broken bullock-cart slow-moving like a tortoise, driven by a pair of emaciated, starving, half-dead oxen, passing on its journey over the narrow rural path. Inside the cart is a blind old man, lazy and slothful, in dirty tatters, belly-in-all, smoking his mud-coated "hukka" in the exuberance of his mental felicity and listening to the shrill jarring sounds of the cart, he feels himself plunged in the dim and shadowy recollections of the past. The

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

owner of this cart is *tamasic ahankara* and the name of the carter is book-lore. He determines the hour of starting and ascertains the direction of his route by consulting the almanac and keeps muttering to himself : "What is extant or what was existent is good enough but the attempt at anything new is bad." Though it cannot take us to God Himself, this car has the immediate possibility of leading to impersonal formless Brahman or the eternal void.

So long as the cart of the *tamasic ahankara* (ego) moves along the uncouth village-path, it is safe. But when it makes its appearance on the highway of the world where quite a number of speedy motor-cars runs hither and thither, the vital being shudders to think what its end will be ; for the danger is that at the time of changing the route of the car, the *tamasic ahankara* (ego) might be quite at a loss to see and accept the new situation with an unerring instinct. It has not even the desire to recognise it because by so doing it happens to be deprived of its profession and ownership. When the problem thus presents itself, some of the passengers say, "Let it remain so, it is better, for it is ours"—they are conservative or emotional patriots. Some say, "Let us

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

mend it by tinckering reforms here and there." This easy process, they say, will transform the cart at once into a blameless invaluable motor-car—these men are called reformers. Some say "Let the beautiful car of old come back." They are often busy to find the means of performing this impossible task. But there is no sign anywhere of their undertaking being successful.

If it be binding and imperative on us to choose among the three and in the event of our shirking still higher pursuits and endeavours it is preferable for us to build the new car of the *swattic ahankāra*. But not till the car of Jagannath (the Lord of the Universe) makes its appearance in the world, the organisation of an ideal society is indeed a veritable impossibility. For that is the long-looked-for ideal, the ultimate goal—the manifestation and reflection of the deepest and profoundest truth.

Impelled by the inspiration of the hidden pervading Deity of the universe (The All-Purusha), mankind is ever busy in creating the ideal society but under the influence of the inherent ignorance of the blind *Prakriti* or Nature-soul, it produces a quite different image or complexion either disfigured, unfinished and ugly or commonplace,

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

half-beautiful and imperfect, inspite of its appearance of beauty. Instead of Siva, it creates either a pigmy or a titan, or a demi-god of the mediocre type of humanity.

The real shape or model of the car of Jagannath is not known to anybody and no architect-of-life is able to design it. The Lord of the universe depicts this picture in the kingdom of His own heart and invests it with manifold appendages. The intention of the divine seer is to unfold it and establish it in the material world through varied and constant efforts of His divine Incarnations as observer and worker.

* * *

The real denomination of the car of Jagannath is not society but commune. It is not a many-sided collective body or a group of persons loosely held together—a divine commune is a commune of free and liberated souls, free and liberated from all bondages and divisions and which is organised and shaped into being out of the sheer intensity of delight and by the force of a concerted power of the knowledge of the divine self.

The collective body or group which does united work in and through a combination of several individuals goes under the name of society.

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

The meanings of words can be traced back to their derivations. The affix "*Sama*" means unitedly and the meaning of the verb "*Aja*" is to go, to run or to fight.

The primeval worldly form of society consists in the association of thousands of men with a view to accomplish the varied functions of their mutual destinies, for the gratification of their various self-regarding desires. In one particular line of action they seek and pursue after different objectives and as a result of this venture a hot competition grows amongst them as to who is to go ahead or who is to be the greatest of them all.

And amidst this confusion and chaos which are a prelude to a new system of order, co-operation, and fruition of their mental psychology, various relations are established, different ideals are introduced and as a result of which something imperfect and transient comes into being.

The primordial society is based on division and that division is established on partial, uncertain and ephemeral unity. But the building of an ideal society is just the contrary to it. Unity is its base and the play of diversity exists not to create walls of division but for multifarious expressions of *anandam*. In society we catch the glimpse of

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

an unity and harmony of body, mind and work but the life of commune consists in soul-unity.

Though confined in a limited sphere many partial and futile attempts have been made for the organisation of communes either swayed by intellectual ideas and inspirations as in the western world or like the followers of great Buddha for the free enjoyment of the cessation of work, calculated to bring about *nirvana* or through the impulse of divine love as was the case with the first Christian Church. But within a very short time, it so happens that these social evils, imperfections and partial tendencies of human nature gradually creep into the soul of the new commune and then reduce it into an ordinary commonplace society.

The thoughts of the restless intellect are short-lived and life whether old or new is carried away by the irresistible surge of nature's instincts. The success of this sort of endeavour is impossible by sheer emotional outbursts, for emotions get exhausted through their very intensity. It is better to seek after *nirvana* alone, for to evolve a commune out of love for *nirvana* is a very strange affair. The commune is ordinarily the fostering field for work and association.

The day when soul-unity will manifest itself

THE CAR OF JAGANNATH.

out of the synthesis and harmony* of knowledge, feeling and action, that day will witness the birth of a new age and by the inspired will of the great communal soul, the car of Jagannath will be exposed to public view in the great highway of the world and dazzle and illumine all parts of its route. And then indeed will the Golden Age be ushered into the bosom of the universe, and the world of moral men will then be turned into a divine play-house, the temple city of God—the abode of *anandam*.

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

Our main contention is that Bengal first and for that matter India ultimately have to voice forth a new message of the life divine to the world and to that end Bengal has already begun preparing herself, India must, too, the next day do the same thing without fail. For the call is unmistakable, the voices that come forth from the regions supramental and spiritual never lie, the national soul, passing through the chaotic pangs of its own rebirth, really awaits for no other man such a world-message of liberation and fulfilment. It is Bengal which has been first chosen as the fit field for this new experiment, for Bengal has long borne the patient labour of nature, it seems now towards this and this end alone ; what with the long processes

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

of purification and fertilisation through centuries of inner culture, what with her infinite genius of rich endeavour, self-less and unconditional consecration to the ideal of the heart together with her high-aspiring and fecund imagination, her pure and genuine emotion, her puissant and reckless application to the chosen ideal of her redolent soul—the spiritual temperament and gift of her people, the history of her psychological and spiritual growth, her subtle and abundant vitality, her inherent spiritual energy born of continual Shakti-worship, her supple thought-powers and vast intuitive potentialities—all seemed to have long long marked her out as the pre-eminently fittest *adhar* for such an age-preparation. For this is exactly what her great mission is—the conception and materialisation of the future mould of the new humanity that is to be born on earth—the hatching and shaping of the new age, the preparation of a new cycle of the natural evolution of man. And who else but she is bold, patient and self-resigned enough for such an unprecedented mission ?

Ethnologists aver that the racial constitution of the Bengali people is a mixture of many bloods—Aryan, Mongolian, Dravidian even, and what not, we see in it *ipso facto* nothing but the seeing

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

preparation of nature of a rich and vigorous life-basis, fed on various blood-streams—the fit ground where-on to rear up an integral mighty culture. It seems as if since her very emergence from her original ocean-lap, she had begun to draw into her veins the sap of many bloods, containing the germs of many cultures, to this secret end in view of this consummation. With the '*Banga-vijoy*' of King Raghu, as alluded to in the epic history of the *Surya-Kula*, we get perhaps the first instalment of Aryan contact, which must have grown in complexity and penetration with the advance of the times, till the period of the Mahabharat, when we begin to find a sort of regular attempts at colonisation by the conjoint efforts of the Kuru and Jadava races. But it is since the rise of Buddhism, that we find a deep beginning of cultural assimilation, for Buddhism with its catholic outlook and wide extending heart naturally evoked a welcome response, congenial to the inherent needs of her internal soil and we find the stamp of this inter-mixture and assimilation, in various aspects of her manners and customs, left even to this day. To take a single example, the festival of the car of Jagan-nath, Ratha-jatra, with the three-fold godheads on the chariot, bear clear marks of Buddhistic in-

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

fluence, in all probability it was but a remnant of the famous Buddhist Trinity, adapted under Hinduised names, perhaps, at the time of the Pauranic revival, following on the heels of the decline of Buddhism, which had, in the meantime in the hands of the masses, degenerated into the horrible Bauddha Tantricism of the earlier Kapaliks. Jagannath-Kshêtra still disguises in Brahminic garbs, tokens of the Catholicism, which after the Buddhistic deterioration in Bengal, filtered through her outskirts and must have left a little leakage of its vestige into that religious colony in Orissa. The spirit of love and wide-embracing heart-culture grew into still more clearness and definiteness of expression in the evolution of Vaishnavism. The original note came ringing, no doubt, penetrating through the passing envelopment of Buddhism, direct from the *Arya* soul, which thus lent its cultural current to form the main constituent of the culture-entity that was developing on the fecund and fertile soil of the Bengalee soul. Bengal Vaishnavism drew its central inspiration from that mighty monument of the Bhakti-cult, the Bhagavat, which is rightly called the fifth wing of the Eternal Veda—but the rich and unexampled development which found its expression through the sweet-voiced

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

Vaishnava poets and its complete and unique fructification in the living symbol, the Avatar of Love, Sri Krishna Chaitanya, rapturously looked upon by the devout Vaishnava world as the greatest manifestation in the Kali of the same Divine Lord, who played in Vrindavan in the Dwapara—all this growth and evolution was the genuine and bountiful fruition of her own mellow soul, peculiar and possible to hers and hers alone.

Tantricism was the next step of Bengal's spiritual evolution. After Love, Shakti and here again it was the peculiar genius of Bengal which found its play and expression. Tantricism brought the cult of the Mother—Durga, Kali, Jagaddhatri, Kamala, Saraswati—the Mother in all her various aspects and forms, forms beautiful as well as forms, terrible, and in this equal worship of the Beautiful and the Terrible, Bengal as a nation has perhaps no rival in the world. In this self-evolved Tantric culture, for here her indebtedness to outside sources and influences is the least, perhaps there may be none at all—Bengal built for herself the second platform of her preparatory toil of national purification—for the virtues and vices of Tantricism purified also—as well as of precipitation for that further development, which was left to the new

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

era to usher in right into her national consciousness—the era which can be safely dated since the introduction of the occidental civilisation. We find one epoch-making great product of Tantricism in the life-constitution of Rammohan himself—the great Raja who has been well called the father of that modern era of Bengal.

Really, with Rammohan begins the new era of our conscious national experiments—for Rammohan, the Tantric, was also Rammohan, the great Vedantin, the first to propagate that doctrine of knowledge in this land of Bhakti and Shakti. Rammohan embodied his clear, luminous, wide-winged catholic principles and ideas not only in the religious field, but also in the social and political, not only in the literary and philosophic, but as powerfully also in the practical advancement of his people, in the forced introduction of scientific culture and European education—for, it must be admitted, without this western enrichment, we should have missed a most important element of our life-growth and mental evolution. Raja Rammohan indeed laid the broad and solid basis, crude though it was under the circumstances of the times of the larger catholic cultural and social experiment, which is bound to fill the future.

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

There was a great gap still left unfilled however—the spiritual summation of all the *sadhana* of the Hindu past. For this came Sri Ramkrishna, the national prophet of Dakshineswar. Ramkrishna's very life was such a summation. With his divine spiritual genius, might we say with an almost titanic colossal gorge he swallowed up the whole spiritual achievement of the Hindu race. In one single life, he lived the whole past history of India—with a sweeping concentration, even the siddhi of Mahammad and Jesus he incorporated into his infinite spiritual receptacle and gave the whole glorious thing to be voiced through Vivekananda—as the first war signal of the coming age, which Bengal and India will have to trumpet forth in her destined hour. That did Vivekananda do indeed with a consummate skill and triumphant success. He, in addition, made some attempts to throw out into a sort of crystallization the ideas for future integral culture—but here, he, only felt the way. The clear conception and actual crystallization of the future creation has been left to his successors.

The integral communal culture, which Ram-mohan hurriedly sketched out, which Vivekananda under the still overshadowing influence of asceticism tried to translate into a clearer but rigidified form,

THE SPIRITUAL CALL OF BENGAL.

that which has been, even far before, in the preceding centuries, faintly hinted through emotional Vaishnava literature and sought to be formulated in the half-illuminated religious sects and subsects which continue even to this day—attempts which were rooted in the heart or the *prana* without any shining and solid basis in knowledge, and were therefore destined to fail or hopelessly deteriorate, much more so when fallen into the fold of the ignorant mass-mind—that wide and synthetic culture, combining God and Life, or to speak more exactly a culture, consisting in the revelation and fulfilment of God in life, of the divine in the human, of the supramental in the folds and frame-works of the mental, the life-material, and even of the actual physical stuff and not only for individual perfection alone, but also and more necessarily and permanently for the perfection of the race in its collective evolutionary march—this seems to be the burden and meaning of the spiritual call of Bengal—the integral call to a freer and more perfect individual, national, and in the long run international life-in-God.

